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AN HOUR WITH THE FATHERS.

1776--1876.

J. G. BUTLER, D. D.



AN HOUR WITH THE FATHERS.

ARE WE A CHRISTIAN NATION?

MEMORIAL CHURCH,

FIRST LORD'S DAY IN THE NEW CENTURY,

BY THE PASTOR,

J. G. BUTLER, D. D.,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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AN HOUR WITH THE FATHERS.*

Jer. 17 : 19—27: "If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day * * then this city shall remain forever. * * But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day * * then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and it shall not be quenched."

Is. 69 : 12: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish."

Ps. 147 : 20: "He has not dealt so with any nation."

Ps. 144 : 15: "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

We have just entered upon the second century of our national life. Shall we celebrate another centennial! The answer to this question gathers around the moral and religious character of the Republic. It was our purpose to look especially at the relation of the Sabbath to us as a people, when we began to live a hundred years ago. This is one of the objective points of attack, as we enter upon our second hundred years. But whilst the record of our early life furnishes all that the most Puritanic Sabbatarian can desire, thought has broadened, and we propose to look at the religious and Christian and Protestant soil, out of which our institutions grow, as the rich fruitage of a wise and godly planting. The world's history furnishes no record like ours, clear and emphatic in all that goes to make up a Biblical, Christian, Protestant nationality.

Antedating our national birth, and going back to the discovery of the continent by Columbus, Roman Catholic as he

* For an exhaustive presentation of this subject the reader is referred to the "Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the U. S.," a most interesting volume, by Rev. B. F. Morris, and from which most of the facts of this article are drawn.

was, as the new world burst upon his vision the voice of praise and thanksgiving rose from his ship, even before his feet pressed the new soil. His first act upon landing, was an act of worship, consecrating this world, with all its inherent wealth, to Jehovah Jesus. In his will, Columbus enjoins upon his son Diego to spare no pains, and to provide teachers and devout persons who shall labor to make Christians of the natives. Our present and prospective greatness and glory never crossed the vision of the immortal explorer of the fifteenth century.

The Pilgrim fathers embarking from England to Holland, more than a hundred years after the discovery by Columbus, and from Holland for America in 1620, were animated with but one controlling thought—God—Jesus—the Gospel—religious freedom—their own vine and fig tree under which they might worship as their Bible and conscience dictated. Their motives were purely and intensely religious. Governor Bradford, of the colony, says, “upon their departure from Holland they set apart a day of solemn humiliation with their pastor, whose text upon the occasion was Ezra 8 : 21, “I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before God and seek of him a right way for our little ones and our substance.” After the sermon, “the rest of the time was spent in pouring out their prayers to the Lord, with great fervency, mixed with abundance of tears.” They were accompanied by most of the brethren to Delft-Haven, where the ship lay to receive them. Winslow says, “never people parted more sweetly, * * seeking, not rashly but deliberately, the mind of God in prayer, and finding his gracious presence with us, and his blessing upon us.”

Upon the landing of the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock, Dec. 22, 1620, the first act of the Puritans was one of devotion. Upon bended knees they offered thanksgiving to God, and by prayer, in the name and for the sake of Christ, they took possession of the continent. That which now gladdens our eyes and our heart, as a people, is not the heritage of infidelity, but of faith—faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in

the Bible, faith in the Church, faith in the Sabbath—the faith of men and women made alive by the Holy Ghost.

The form of government which these Fathers now institute in this new land was framed in the cabin of the Mayflower before landing, and was ratified under the solemnities of prayer. This compact says: "Having undertaken for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith, * * we solemnly, in the presence of God and one another, covenant," &c., &c. Bancroft says: "This was the birth of constitutional liberty." The soil in which the tree, under whose wide-spreading branches we rest, was planted, was consecrated by prayer and watered with the tears of the children of God. Is our land a Christian land? Has the God-fearing citizen rights which all men are bound to respect?

In 1643, the Colonies of Massachusetts, New Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven formed a confederation, in which they affirm that "we all came into these parts of America with the same end and ayme, namely to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ * * and for preserving and propagating the truth and liberties of the Gospel." Charles I., in the Charter, granted to Massachusetts in 1640, enjoins the colonists "to winn and invite the natives to the knowledge of the only true God and Saviour of mankind and the Christian faith * * ." When Charles II. demanded a surrender of their charter, and with it their independence as a free Christian commonwealth, the remonstrance of the colonists, and their resolve, breathe the spirit of the axiom that "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." As in apostolic days, in this trial time, our fathers appointed a day of fasting, and laid the matter before the Lord. They had faith in the power of prayer. Indeed so closely were God and truth interwoven into the very texture of early colonial life, that the civil court, when convened for the transaction of ordinary business, spent a portion of each day in prayer—six elders praying and a minister preaching a sermon. A daily prayer-meeting in a court room! Have we advanced upon the ancients—forward or backward?

As we run through the history of these colonies, now in-

creasing in number, the same spirit of simple faith, as a golden chain, binds and illumines and beautifies and sanctifies them all. In 1639, when the people of Connecticut met in a large barn to lay the foundations of their civil and religious structure, a sermon, from the text "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars," was preached by the pastor, Mr. Davenport. A constitution was formed in which the people, *after prayer*, entered into combination to "preserve and maintain the liberty and purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which we now possess." Among their fundamental principles, they say that "the Scriptures hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in all duties which they are to perform to God and men," &c. The same spirit animates the early history of Rhode Island and New Hampshire. When in 1682, William Penn assumed the governorship of the new territory, a charter for which had been granted by Charles II., he avowed his purpose to be, the institution of a civil government "upon the *basis of the Bible*, and to administer it in the fear of the Lord—so to serve the truth and the people of the Lord, that an example may be set to the nations." The preamble to the first legislative act of the new colony, passed at Chester, 1682, says: "Whereas the glory of Almighty God and the good of all mankind is the end of all good government," &c. "All persons who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and eternal God * * who hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly," &c.—have guaranteed to them protection and freedom from persecution," &c. Governor Penn also originated the law, "according to the good example of the primitive Christians," requiring the people every *first day* of the week, commonly called the Lord's day, "to abstain from their ordinary labor—masters, parents, children, and servants, that they may better dispose themselves to read the Scriptures of truth at home, or to frequent such meetings for religious worship abroad, as may best suit their respective persuasions."

The colonial legislature of New York, 1665, passed a law ordering a church to be built in each parish capable of hold-

ing two hundred persons, that ministers of every church shall preach every Sunday," &c., &c. They also enacted "that Sunday is not to be profaned by traveling, by laborers or vicious persons, and church wardens to report twice a year all misdemeanors, such as swearing, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness," &c.

The question of Bible and prayer in our public schools, is one of the agitating questions of the present day. In at least one locality in New York in colonial times, it was required at the opening of the school that one of the children should read the morning prayer as it stands in the catechism, and close with the prayer before dinner, and in the afternoon the same." "The evening school must begin with the Lord's Prayer and close by singing a Psalm." The school teacher "must instruct the children in the common prayers and the questions and answers of the catechism on Wednesdays and Saturdays, to enable them to say them better in the Church" on the Lord's day. The teacher was to "read the ten commandments and the twelve articles of faith, and then sett the psalm" at church meetings—besides perform sundry other like duties. There was but one mind among the colonists in reference to the Scriptures in the schools.

In this search we cannot notice in detail the facts showing the same religious spirit animating the birth of all the colonies, only here and there we give a fact bearing upon the point. The very first Act of the Assembly of Virginia *required* every settlement in which the people worship God to build a house to be devoted exclusively to that purpose. The second Act imposed a penalty of a pound of tobacco *for absence from divine service* on Sunday, and another law prohibited any man from disposing of his tobacco *until the minister's portion was paid*."—If all absentees were fined now, there would not be many empty church treasuries. The men who make the Lord's portion the last, and not the first, may learn their duty both from this colonial Virginia law and from their Bible, if they read it carefully. "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the *first* fruits of all thine increase."

A promise follows this command from the mouth of God. We need a revival of Bible *doing* religion.

The *Educational* history of our grand Republic is in keeping with its civil and ecclesiastical, if indeed we can define the limits of the one or the other. The kingdom of God was the overshadowing and all-animating thought with these builders. The church and state, religion and education, were not divorced, at least in the spirit of the building or of the builders. "Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it," was the one faith article of these grand old heroes. Intelligence and piety were the two strong pillars upon which they reared the great fabric, and hence we have a rich educational history also. Possibly our cotemporary laborers, often discouraged, may gain inspiration and strength by a review of this page of our nation's life. Our beginnings here, as in everything else, as in all life, were weak and small. But *life*, when from God and Truth, is irresistible, immortal. In 1635, free schools were inaugurated in Boston, whose example was rapidly followed by the smaller towns. In 1647, the General Court, "for the promotion of common education, *ordered* that every township after that the *Lord* had increased them to the number of fifty householders, should forthwith appoint a teacher * * whose wages should be paid as the prudentials of town should appoint." Every town of "a hundred householders should set up a grammar school * * to fit the children for the University." Here is the germ of which the New England culture of to-day is the rich fruitage.

Harvard—our oldest American College—so named from Rev. John Harvard, who gave one-half his property and all his library to the College at Cambridge, had a small but very interesting beginning. There was not much wealth among the Colonists, two hundred and forty years ago, when this College began. "The magistrates led the way by a subscription among themselves of two hundred pounds, in books for the library. The comparatively wealthy followed with gifts of twenty and thirty pounds. The needy multi-

tude succeeded, like the widow of old, casting their mites into the treasury. A number of sheep were bequeathed by one man; a quantity of cotton cloth, worth nine shillings presented by another; a pewter flagon, worth ten shillings, by a third; a fruit dish, a sugar spoon, a silver-tipt jug, one great set and one smaller set by others."

In this institution, now Cambridge University, and which we have reason to fear has greatly departed from the faith, none could teach until he had first declared his "belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments," which he must promise to open and explain to his pupils, with integrity and faithfulness according to the best light God should give him." The students were required to read the Scriptures twice daily, and to attend statedly upon God's ordinances, all through the College course every class must be "practised in the *Bible and catechetical divinity*." Harvard was really a school of the prophets, designed to furnish an able ministry of the New Testament. That indigent students might be aided, the Colonial Commissioners recommended that "every family be called upon to furnish voluntarily a peck of corn or twelve pence in money, or its equivalent, or other commodities." And to this recommendation the poor Colonists are said to have cheerfully responded. Let struggling colleges take courage.

In 1652, steps were taken, chiefly by the clergy of that day, towards the founding of Yale College, of New Haven, "from a sincere regard to and zeal for upholding the Protestant religion." The history of Harvard is substantially that of Yale, and indeed of nearly all the hundreds of colleges now dotted all over our land. Godly, Christly men gave them being, and in them they live and move. What have the enemies of the Bible, of the Church and her ministers, done to enlighten and elevate and ennoble, not to say evangelize and save the masses? Christo et Ecclesiae, said the pious founders of our first college, and we may inscribe the same motto upon every temple of sound learning in the land and in the world.

Turning from this line of thought, we will reach the same conclusions if we look at the *character of the men* who put to-

gether the frame-work of our Government. They believed in God, were trained under Christian influences, and were largely men of pronounced Christian faith. James Otis, who probably gave the key note to the Colonial Revolution, was educated by Rev. Jonathan Russell. In his thrilling Boston speech, in 1761,—antedating the Declaration of Independence fifteen years—he speaks of our “right to be free as a grant of Almighty God, who made all men naturally equal.” Samuel Adams, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, made his house, evening and morning, a house of prayer—was a man of pronounced and strong Christian faith. Wirt, the biographer of the fiery and impassioned Patrick Henry, says of him that he was a sincere Christian. His favorite religious books were Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, Butler’s *Analogy of Religion natural and revealed*, and Jenyn’s *internal evidences of the Christian religion*. “The Bible,” said Henry, “is a book worth more than all other books that were ever printed.” In his will, after disposing of his property to his family, “there is one thing he said, I wish I could give them, and that is *the Christian religion!*” John Hancock, whose name stands out so prominently among the signers of our Magna Charta, himself President of the Congress of 1776, was the son of a clergyman, and was distinguished for his piety as well as for his patriotism. In cheering his patriot companions, he said: “Let us play the men, for our God and for the cities of our God, let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the universe, who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. * * * Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet we will rejoice in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our salvation.” The inspiration of faith animates the heart of John Hancock. John Adams, the first Vice President and Second President of the United States, was the son of a congregational deacon, and himself a member of the Church. He was a faithful attendant upon the public

worship of God, and exerted himself to extend the beneficent influence of the Gospel. Jefferson said of him that "a man more perfectly honest never came from the hands of the Creator." As our first Minister to England, in his address to the Queen, he spoke of the "seeds of *piety* sown by her kingdom in these colonies, as constituting the prosperity of nations and the happiness of the human race." Roger Sherman, whose marble statue adorns our Capitol, of whose memory New England will ever be proud, who was one of the strongest pillars of the revolution, was also an outspoken follower of Jesus, of whom Jefferson said, he was "*a man who never said a foolish thing in his life.*" He adorned his profession by applying Christian principle to every thing. John Witherspoon, President of Princeton College, whose name and fame are now being perpetuated by a marble statue in our Centennial grounds, by a Church rightly proud of his memory, was a minister of the Gospel of distinguished ability. Benjamin Franklin was trained in the school of Puritan piety, where were laid the foundation of his imperishable name and fame. Thus I might run through a long list of Revolutionary and early names, and say many things of them illustrating the point before us. Thomas Jefferson, the penman of the Declaration of Independence, commonly regarded an exception to his cotemporaries in their religious and Christian faith, was not a disbeliever. In his first message, as President of the United States, he says: "I shall need the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers as Israel of old, * * * who has covered our infancy with His Providence. * * I ask you to join me in supplication that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their counsels, &c., &c." "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and that His justice cannot sleep forever." It is said that no man at the Capitol ever gave so much to build churches as Jefferson. He gave money to Bible societies, and was a regular contributor to the support of the clergy. He attended church with regularity—the Episcopal Church, and carried his prayer book with him—joining in the responses with the congregation.

Though Jefferson evidently was not sound according to the received standard of orthodoxy, yet we cannot write him an Atheist, a scoffer, an enemy, or even a neglecter of religious ordinances.

The heads and hearts and hands of these men laid the foundation and put together the frame work of this government. Let me ask, Is our nation a Christian nation? Are the enemies of the Bible, the Church, the Sabbath—the enemies of our God and of His Christ—our friends, or the friends of constitutional liberty? When the immortal signers mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, it was with a firm reliance upon Divine Providence, and a reverent appeal to the Supreme Ruler of the world. The man who does not fear God must be feared—cannot be trusted. During the earnest and somewhat threatening debates that marked the Convention out of which our Constitution came, it was only after *prayer*, upon motion of Dr. Franklin, that the Convention was able to reach harmonious results. These men felt their need of the Divine wisdom, and called upon the clergy to pray. It is said, that after the Convention adjourned, Rev. Dr. Miller, of Princeton, met Alexander Hamilton and said, “Mr. Hamilton, we are greatly grieved that the Constitution has no recognition of God or the Christian religion.” “I declare,” said Hamilton, “we forgot it.” Upon the attention of Washington being called to this omission, he said, “the path of true piety is so plain as to require but little political direction.” The Constitution, however, whilst not as explicit as the friends of Christ desire, yet does, in various ways, directly and impliedly, affirm its Christian character. The time, we trust, will come when another amendment will put this point beyond all peradventure. The religious life of the rulers and people is however a better exposition of our Christian faith than even a Constitutional acknowledgment would be.

Scientists, falsely so called, may ignore God and sneeringly question the efficacy of prayer, but no American citizen can read the history of his country and for a moment question the faith of the men who anxiously laid the foundation

upon which we are yet building. The first act of the first session of the Continental Congress, Sept. 6, 1776, was the passage of a resolution "inviting Rev. Mr. Duchè to open Congress to-morrow morning with prayer, at Carpenter's Hall, at nine o'clock." And to-morrow morning Mr. Duchè did not only pray, but read the thirty-first Psalm, with marked effect upon the assembled wisdom of the nation. Mr. Duchè's prayer is preserved and a vote of thanks was passed for his "excellent prayer." The opening prayer of every session of Congress is still reported in the official Record.

The public worship of God was not ignored by the statesmen of the Revolution. The records show that July 15, 1775, Congress "resolved to attend service in a *body*, on Thursday next, *both morning and afternoon*." Such resolution would have graced every subsequent Congress to the present.

The scarcity of Bibles soon began to be felt by reason of the Revolution destroying our commerce with England, and Sept. 11, 1777, Congress directed the Committee of Commerce to import *twenty thousand copies of the Bible*, from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere. In 1782, Congress recommended, by resolution, to the inhabitants of the United States an edition of the Bible published by Rev. Mr. Aitken, and speak of his undertaking "as pious and laudable, and subservient to the the interests of religion." In October 1778, Congress said:

"Whereas, True religion and good morals are the only solid foundations of public liberty and happiness;

"Resolved, That it hereby is earnestly recommended to the several States to take the most effectual measures for the encouragement thereof and for the suppressing theatrical entertainments, horse racing, gaming, and such other diversions as are productive of idleness, dissipation and a general depravity of principles and manners.

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"Resolved, That any person holding an office under the United States, who shall act, promote, encourage, or attend such plays, be deemed unworthy to hold such office, and shall be accordingly dismissed."

What would be the fate of such preamble and resolutions

in a modern Congress! Verily, the fathers were vigilant to keep the fountain pure—to make the tree good.

April 29, 1779, the day preceding the inauguration of President Washington, Congress, the first assembled after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, "*Resolved*, That after the oath shall be administered to the President, Vice-President and members of the Senate, the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives, will accompany him to St. Paul's chapel to hear divine service performed by the chaplain." And they did so accompany him, of that first Congress our own noble Muhlenberg being the honored Speaker. Previous to this first inauguration, on the morning of the day, a union prayer meeting was held by the various Christian denominations of New York, asking God's blessing upon the President and the new government. A similar meeting was held in St. Paul's Lutheran Church of this city, of which the writer was then pastor, upon the evening of the day of President Lincoln's inauguration. It was a meeting full of spiritual power. At the other end of the city an inaugural ball was in progress.

During this same first session of the first Congress under the Constitution, resolutions were unanimously adopted requesting the President of the United States to recommend a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God," &c. Its adoption was urged by precedents from Holy Writ. Accordingly, President Washington did publicly proclaim Thursday, the 26th day of November, 1789, to be religiously observed. We still have days of national humiliation, thanksgiving and praise. Let all the people praise the Lord.

We might thus, at great length, run through these early records, but the search would only confirm what is already plain. Every candid mind can gather but one inspiration from the whole of this early history—the inspiration of faith and godliness. The fathers feared God and wrought righteousness. And shall not we, the children, be true to the faith of the fathers?

We may add, with interest, one or two of the orders of

the Commander-in-Chief, during the Revolution. It was represented to Congress that profaneness generally, and particularly cursing and swearing, shamefully prevailed in the army. The attention of Washington, by resolution, was called to it. In 1776, he issued the following order: "That the troops may have an opportunity of attending public worship * * the General in future excuses them from fatigue duty on Sundays * * ." Then referring to that "foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing," he hopes that "both officers and men will reflect that we can have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms if we insult it by our impiety and folly." In his Valley Forge order, he directs that divine service be performed every Sunday at ten o'clock in each brigade with a chaplain, and that brigades without chaplains, will attend the place of worship nearest them * * ." Upon the surrender of Cornwallis, at Yorktown, October 21, 1781, which closed the war of the Revolution, Washington at once ordered religious services in commemoration of the restoration of peace. Our Washington was a man of faith and prayer. "True religion," said he, "affords to government its surest support."

From our colonial days to the present, notwithstanding our growing worldliness and skepticism, God has been among us. The enemies of religion have not been able to obliterate the divine recognition in the Christian legislation and religious life of succeeding generations, among rulers and people.

This hasty review reveals the efficient source and cause of our present greatness and glory. During our first century we have grown from thirteen Colonies to thirty-eight States, with territory enough to make as many more; from three to more than forty millions of people; from an Atlantic border strip, we have grown until the two great oceans wash our shores. In agriculture, manufactures, commerce, science, art, education, we have steadily advanced. Our common schools, with a multitude of colleges and seminaries for higher education, open to all the people of every sex and color, are our national boast, and furnish a strong bulwark against our enemies. Sectarian education must be by sec-

tarian contributions. National education whilst not sectarian, is yet, and must continue to be, religious. The Bible has not yet been banished, and our hope in God is that it never will be, from our common schools. In religion the people have not fallen to sleep. Against about 1,950 churches, in 1776, we have nearly 75,000, in 1876, representing every phase of religious life. In addition, our humane and religious agencies are well-nigh innumerable. The well-being of man and beast—our charities are cosmopolitan under gospel influences. The seed was scattered by our godly fathers, and this is its rich fruitage. Ours is a Christian civilization, defective as our life may be—the outgrowth of the institutions founded upon the Bible—God's revealed will.

“Here we raise our Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help we 've come.”

As in the past, our blessings flow from these sources, so this review suggests the hope of our security for the future. We are yet young as a Republic. Other nations have survived much longer than the days of our years, and then have died. There is no talismanic power in our union, nor in our wisdom, nor in our arms, to make us strong against right and against God. We shall live much longer than we deserve to live. Our King is merciful and slow to anger. But “the nation and kingdom that will not serve Him, shall be utterly wasted.” The nation's life hangs upon the nation's faith. None can harden themselves against Him and prosper. Our Bible, our Sabbath, our Church, our godly rulers and godly people, are our hope, through God our Rock. If God be for us, who can be against us? If God be against us, who can save us? Wrong doing has in it inherently the elements of self-destruction. Whatsoever nations, as well as men, sow, they shall also reap. This is God's universal law. Our danger lies in the elements of evil incident to our growth, and to the heterogeneous character of our people. The protection that we guarantee to all in the rights of conscience, develops men who have no conscience toward God or their neighbor. Men of the baser sort, “without God, and having

no hope"—not caring to have any. The enemies of the Bible, of the Sabbath, of the Church, and of moral and religious agencies are the enemies of the Republic. Upon the Christian people of the land rests the great responsibility of preserving and transmitting this rich heritage of our fathers. We are no less citizens than Christians—members of the body politic, as well as of the kingdom that shall never be moved. The Church and the State cannot, in this sense, be divorced. We must render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. There is no inconsistency between the ballot box and the communion table. In our Government, the people being the sovereigns, the connection between the two kingdoms—the temporal and spiritual is inseparable. The sin of too many good people has been to surrender the affairs of government to men scheming, unprincipled, and ungodly. It is the duty of Christian patriots to choose godly rulers—to have righteous laws and a righteous execution of them. Righteousness exalteth a nation, and the responsibility of defending and preserving our institutions of civil and religious freedom, is with the godly citizen.

This review gives hope of another and yet another centennial. True, we have among us corrupt men, and, from the days of the patriot sires to the present, there have ever been unfaithful men in public and private life. To the dawn of the millennium there will be. When we consider the immense growth of our Government, the corruptions of these times are not greater than they were a hundred years ago. The human heart and life average no greater depravity now than then. Nor is the religious faith and life of the children less than was that of our fathers. The sacramental host, an immense and ever growing multitude, yet with unshaken faith and unfaltering courage, with an ever increasing intelligence, rallies still around the Bible, the Sabbath, the Church. The decay of the things in which good people differ marks our age. The old lines over which great battles have been fought are fading under the increasing light of the growing centuries. The Saviour's intercessory prayer, "that they *all*

may *be one*," we have reason to hope, is more nearly fulfilled than since the days of the infant apostolic Church. But in the midst of all the religious and irreligious agitations of these sifting times, not one grain of *truth* is lost—only the chaff. The wrapping over which men have been contending, has been detached and carried into the wilderness. Against the *Church upon the Rock*, the gates of hell have not prevailed, and will not. Our children and our children's children will enjoy the blessings that centre in our Bible and in our flag, and whilst we sing the "new song," the coming generations will acknowledge God in another and yet another centennial exceeding this in glory. God is our refuge and strength, and this God shall be our God forever and ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.







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